

# FLIGHT JACKET

Vol. 6, No. 40

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

October 15, 2004

## MIRAMAR AIR SHOW

### THUNDER OVER MIRAMAR: THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

*Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen, commanding general, MCAS Miramar, welcomes you to...*

## The world's largest military air show

Welcome to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, host of the world's largest and most spectacular military air show and home to the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

This year's event, "Thunder over Miramar: The Sound of Freedom," will display the dazzling aerobatics of our civilian aviation participants and the awe inspiring capabilities and might of Navy and Marine Corps aviation.

The Marine Air Ground Task Force demonstration, civilian aerial performers, a complete display of military equipment, and of course, the world famous Blue Angels are sure to bring delight to the young, as well as the young at heart.

As you make your way through the displays and observe the skillful aerobatics of the demonstrations, you might note that these amazing, technologically advanced military aircraft are ineffective without the brave and courageous men and women who wear the uniform. Many of the Marines and Sailors participating in this year's air show have been directly involved in the Global War on Terror and some are preparing to soon deploy in support of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the globe. We ask that you honor them by pausing a brief moment to recognize their sacrifices and even more importantly, to reflect upon the ultimate sacrifices of our fallen, who have given their lives to support the cause of freedom.

Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of support for those Marines and Sailors currently deployed, and their families during these challenging times.

We are confident that you will thoroughly enjoy all of this year's performances. Once again, welcome to the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show. We are truly honored to be able to bring you this spectacular event.



BRIG. GEN. CARL B. JENSEN  
Commanding General  
MCAS Miramar



The Blue Angels perform the "Echelon Parade." The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, based at Naval Air Station Pensacola, performs all over the world. The Miramar Air Show returns to San Diego today through Sunday. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Saul McSween

The world-famous Miramar Air Show returns to San Diego once again! In keeping with the theme for 2004, "Thunder over Miramar: The Sound of Freedom," the Blue Angels will be joined by military and civilian performers flying jets, propeller planes, old warbirds and even a sailplane, hang glider and jet truck.

There has been "thunder" over Miramar since the early days of World War II, when Marine and Naval aviators trained here to defend our freedom across the far reaches of the Pacific. Today, nearly 60 years after the end of that war, another generation of Marine and Naval aviators continue to hone their flying skills over this busy base.

The "thunder" over Miramar is typically created by U.S. Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornet attack fighters, KC-130 Hercules refueling and cargo planes and a mix of helicopter squadrons flying CH-53E Super Stallions and CH-46E Sea Knights. More than 11,000 Marines of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area work around the clock to keep the mission running smoothly.

The annual Miramar Air Show and Open House has punctuated that thunder 48 times over the past 50 years. Originally conducted at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, the show was moved to MCAS Miramar in 1999.

Third MAW units aboard MCAS Miramar provide aviation support for the Marine ground forces based at Camp Pendleton and Marine Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms. Aviation support is a key element of the Marine Air Ground Task Force, or MAGTF, which also has command, ground combat and combat service support elements. Visitors to the Miramar Air Show will see a thrilling MAGTF demonstration take place over, around and right in front of them—they'll feel the thunder!

MCAS Miramar is also home to the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, featuring historical aircraft in a walk-around, park-like setting that encourages close inspection of each aircraft. The museum is free and open to the public (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday); call (858) 693-1723 for details.

This year's air show takes place today through Sunday, with a twilight air show Saturday. Admission and parking for the air show are free. Upgraded seating is available, with prices ranging from \$8 for grandstands and \$17 for box seats, to the exclusive Semper Fi Chalet in the \$60-\$70 range (which includes meals and beverages).

See pages 6 and 7 for more air show information

## Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



76°/58°  
Today



74°/56°  
Saturday



73°/57°  
Sunday

**Marines find weapons cache in Iraq**  
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**Avengers drive into action**  
**PAGE 8**





# Miramar prepares for emergencies

Story by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Miramar Marines and Sailors routinely train to respond to various emergency situations. Mass casualty exercises and weapons of mass destruction drills help identify how the base reacts to threats, and what improvements personnel can make when they respond.

There is some information servicemembers and civilian employees may want to know concerning personal precautions and protocol that will assist in safety in a mass casualty emergency.

After a threat has been identified, the station stands up an emergency operation center. The center gets information to the different shops on base, and employs the Mass Notification System.

“One of the tools used to alert Miramar personnel is the Mass Notification System, (sometimes) referred to as the ‘giant voice.’ Loudspeakers positioned throughout the air station can broadcast important information regarding public safety,” said Kevin Kelley, anti-terrorism force protection program manager, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area. “It starts with a wailing siren to get the attention of those who are outdoors, and then follows with instructions read over the loudspeaker.”

It is important to listen to the message being read over the loudspeaker, as it will give directions to personnel on how to remain safe during dangerous situations. In the case of a drill, it will give instruction on what areas to avoid during the exercise.

“Phone trees and basewide e-mails are two additional tools used to reach Marines, Sailors and civil-

ians at the their work stations. The Miramar Combat Visual Information Center can broadcast time-sensitive information using the Miramar Command Channel 39,” said Kelley.

“The basewide notification plan is designed to disseminate important information to station personnel. The plan consists of several components to reach as many units and personnel as possible in a short time frame,” Kelley continued. “For example, if a crisis event occurs here, i.e., terrorist incident, natural disaster, etc., the station’s operations section and the Provost Marshal’s Office work together to notify both station and 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing personnel.”

Miramar’s fire department plays an important role in the event of a threat or incident by providing immediate, on-scene support.

“Firefighters are first responders to an emergency—we go right to the scene,” said Jerry P. Sack, fire chief, Miramar Fire Department. “We immediately try to get everyone safely away from the threat area. Once we have determined an area is safe, we worry about secondary threats, like explosive devices.”

Personnel aboard Miramar can take a proactive stance in helping with safety as well, explained Sack. “Education and awareness is important. Knowing what building number you work in is helpful when calling in an emergency. Also, having primary and secondary escape routes out of buildings is extremely important.”

The Fire Prevention Office can assist in setting up fire safety plans and preventative measures free of cost. Those wishing to set up an appointment for instruction can call 577-1962 or 577-1963.

## Department of Homeland Security improves safety communications

Official Press Release

Department of Homeland Security

Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge announced the Oct. 1 launch of the Office of Interoperability and Compatibility. The OIC is designed to help state and local public safety practitioners improve communications interoperability.

The Office of Interoperability and Compatibility, part of the Science & Technology directorate, will oversee the wide range of public safety interoperability programs and efforts currently spread across Homeland Security. These programs address critical interoperability issues relating to public safety and emergency response, including communications, equipment, training and other areas, as needs are identified.

“This office will ensure that Homeland Security is exercising its leadership role to bring local, state and federal efforts together in a partnership that is essential to national progress on interoperability,” said Ridge. “This is a national effort, not a federal effort, and I thank the first-responder community for their initiative and collaboration.”

Specific responsibilities for the OIC will include:

- \* Supporting the creation of interoperability standards;

- \* Establishing a comprehensive research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) program for improving public safety interoperability;

- \* Identifying and certifying all DHS programs that touch on interoperability;

- \* Integrating coordinated grant guidance across all DHS grant-making agencies that touch on public safety interoperability;

- \* Overseeing the development and implementation of technical assistance for public safety interoperability;

- \* Conducting pilot demonstrations;

- \* Creating an interagency interoperability coordination council; and

- \* Coordinating and working closely with the new National Incident Management System (NIMS) Integration Center.

The OIC will help leverage public safety community resources by promoting cooperation across all levels of government and coordination among federal programs and activities related to interoperability. As a central clearinghouse for information about and assistance with interoperability issues, the office will reduce unnecessary duplication in public safety programs and spending, and will also identify and promote interoperability best practices in the public safety arena.



## Is this your Hyundai?

The above vehicle is marked for impound by the Provost Marshal’s Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lot. For more information, contact 577-1276 or 577-4150.

## MIRAMARKS

“What are you looking forward to during the MCAS Miramar Air Show?”



**CPL. DUANE A. CRAWFORD**

Navigator  
VMGR-352

“I’ll be flying in the MAGTF demonstration. I’ve always liked watching air shows as a kid, and now I’m gonna be part of the performance. That’s pretty cool.”

**PFC. JAMES L. GIROUD**

Airframes Mechanic  
VMFA-323

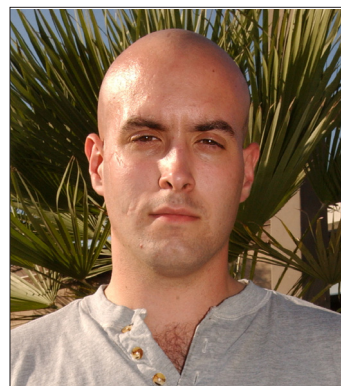
“I’d like to see our planes fly because we work so hard on them.”



**CPL. RANDY J. KAUFFMAN**

Avionics technician  
HMH-466

“My mom is going to be in town for it, and my whole family is prior military, so I’d like to show her some of the newer stuff they’ve come out with.”



**MAJ. GEN. KEITH J. STALDER**  
Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



**BRIG. GEN. CARL B. JENSEN**  
Commander MCABWA  
Commanding General  
MCAS Miramar

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**Cpl. Paul Leicht**

## FLIGHT JACKET

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# Blast reveals weapons cache in Iraq

Story by Lance Cpl. Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.

1st MarDiv Combat Correspondent

AL KHARMA, Iraq - A convoy of Marines from Company I, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, was struck by the blast from an Improvised Explosive Device Sept. 27 on their way to conduct a presence patrol in the Al Kharma area.

Several Marines quickly set up security as dust and debris began to settle. The Marines would end up lucky this day, first for sustaining no casualties from the explosion, and second, for what they soon would find.

“It is a good thing that we came out of it with no one getting hurt. Usually it is hard to come out of an IED attack without taking several injuries,” said Cpl. Cesar L. Gomez, team leader with Company I, 3/1.

Trying to find anyone who may have been involved with the attack, the Marines scoured the area and surrounding houses.

“Our enemy is determined, but we are more determined,” said Sgt. Justin W. Green, a squad leader with Company I, 3/1. “The enemy will not stop us from completing our mission.”

The Marines were not able to find any wires to trace back to an enemy observation post. However, as the Marines scanned the

premises with metal detectors for clues or other possible IEDs, they discovered something else.

About 300 yards from the explosion, the Marines worked to dig up twenty-two 82mm mortar shells, 21 Rocket-Propelled Grenade rounds, two RPG launchers and just under thirty .50-caliber anti-aircraft rounds.

“Finding a weapons cache of this size is like scoring a touchdown in a football game,” said Staff Sgt. John T. Norred, a platoon sergeant with Company I, 3/1. “There is a sense of pride amongst the platoon when they find a huge supply of weapons and ammunition.”

Norred realized the importance of taking these weapons out of the hands of the anti-Iraqi forces.

“You know for a fact that this weapon is not going to hurt a fellow Marine,” said Norred, 32, a native of Decatur, Ga. “This isn’t going to hurt one of my friends. I’m taking this stuff off the street.”

“We usually don’t find this much in a normal cache,” said Gomez, 22, a native of New York.

Although spirits were high as the Marines piled the seized munitions in the Humvee, they realized the day’s findings were merely a drop in the bucket.

“It is only a portion of what is out there, but every little bit counts,” said Green, a

Whately, Mass., native.

The Marines plan to continue in their efforts to remove illegal weapons caches from the area.

“You try not to dwell on the bad things

that can happen out here. We just have to focus on completing our mission,” said Green, 23. “Our platoon takes a sense of pride in going above and beyond what we are called to do.”



Company I, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, found a weapons cache after an Improvised Explosive Device was set off in front of the lead vehicle while on a convoy through the streets of Al Kharma, Iraq, Sept. 27. Photo by Lance Cpl. Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.



Sgt. Raymond L. Navarro III, 26, a native of Fresno, Calif. and an antitank assault man with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, holds up two hand grenades dug up from a cache found in Al Kharma, Iraq, Sept. 27. The grenades were found in a tin can along with documentation written in Arabic believed to be terrorist propaganda. Photo by Lance Cpl. Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.



# VMA-542 power line Marines keep Harriers in the fight

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

*3rd MAW Combat Correspondent*

ALASAD, Iraq — Every day, before and after every flight, enlisted Marines work with Marine pilots here to make sure their aircraft are operational and ready for missions.

For the power line Marines of Marine Attack Squadron 542, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, being able to get their squadron's AV-8B Harriers cleared for flight here is a job that they take very seriously.

"Before each flight, we work very closely with the pilot to prepare the jet before he taxis out for take off," said 33-year-old Sgt. E.L. Ross Jr., power plant collateral duty inspector, VMA-542. "We conduct a full inspection of all the aircraft's systems before and after each flight.

"We inspect the engines, the fuel systems, water and basically anything on the outside of the aircraft from the refueling probe to the tires," he added. "There is no margin for error out here and we have to be 100 percent right all the time."

Ross added that power line Marines, through attention to detail and dedication,

ensure the integrity of the aircraft so the pilot can fly safely and accomplish his mission.

"We have a special relationship with the pilots because we are right there on the outside of the aircraft telling him whether things are good to go," said Ross. "There is a lot of trust between us."

Given the importance of their job, the amount of latitude the power line Marines receive to perform their duties is understandable.

"The bottom line is that a Marine's life is in our hands," said 19-year-old Lance Cpl. Nathaniel E. Insley, plane captain, VMA-542, and a native of Wesson, Miss. "We have final say on whether a jet is safe to fly and with that authority comes a lot of responsibility."

To earn the title of plane captain, power line Marines spend up to 6 months learning as much as they can about each of their aircraft's avionics systems.

"Becoming a plane captain is not easy, and for a young lance corporal to earn that shows a lot of motivation and technical knowledge," said Ross. "They are trouble-shooters too, and if they find anything wrong



**Lance Cpl. Nathaniel E. Insley, plane captain, Marine Attack Squadron 542, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, signals a thumbs up to an AV-8B Harrier pilot during a preflight inspection by the squadron's power line Marines at Al Asad, Iraq, Sept. 27. Before and after each flight, all of the aircraft's systems are checked to ensure the jet is fully operational and the pilot has a safe flight to complete his mission. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht**

with a jet, they have full authority to cancel a flight until the problem can be solved so our jets can stay in the fight."

The accomplishments of the squadron's power line Marines have not gone unnoticed.

"They are really doing an outstanding job," said Lt. Col. Russell A. Sanborn, commanding officer, VMA-542. "We are proud of them and appreciate what they do for us and our aircraft everyday."

# MAG-16 Marines continue training in Iraq



**Marines from Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, send rounds downrange during a battle-sight zeroing exercise at Al Asad, Iraq. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte**

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

*3rd MAW Combat Correspondent*

ALASAD, Iraq — The old Marine Corps saying clearly states "If it ain't raining, we ain't training."

It hasn't rained at the desert air base of Al Asad, Iraq, in

months, but there has definitely been training for the personnel of Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

In the past several months, the Marines have been engaged in a wide array of training—some routine and some unique to the environment—since deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The mission at hand is first and foremost for all the deployed Marines, but if the situation permits, opportunities should always be taken to train, said Sgt. Francisco Rubio, training chief, MAG-16.

"A lot of personnel here are operationally committed to their jobs," said the 26-year-old from Pacoima, Calif. "It's hard to get them away, so if we have the time, we definitely love to do training.

"It's not hard to teach a Marine, because they are always ready to learn," he added. "Regardless of the type of environment, if you have downtime, you can do some training."

The different training courses that MAG-16 has offered their deployed Marines encompass many aspects of the Marine persona: leadership, marksmanship and close-combat skills, among others.

One recent training event was Corporal's Course 03-04,

a first in country for many of the deployed Marines involved, said Sgt. John W. Gerbacia, a 34-year-old faculty advisor with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452, MAG-16, 3rd MAW. Gerbacia, who normally works in the administrative section of his unit, talked about how his commanding officer, Lt. Col. Bradley S. James, brought the idea to the squadron sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Leland H. Hilt.

"The (commanding officer) went to the sergeant major, who presented us with the task of running a Corporal's Course. We have run other courses before, and we felt like it would be good for the unit," said Gerbacia, who has helped run two other courses this year, but only this one while deployed to Iraq. "It's a motivating thing teaching young Marines and molding them into what Marines should be—leaders."

The course consisted, "mostly of leadership traits and principles, five-paragraph orders and things like that," Gerbacia continued. "It's all geared toward small unit leadership and how we operate on that level. To make good decisions, you have to be a good leader. That's what we teach them."

The course was an overall success because every Ma-

**See TRAINING, page 10**



# Miramar celebrates national fire prevention week

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Mount St. Helens killed 57 people when it erupted in 1980 and recent attention has once again been focused on the notorious volcano for fear it may cause the same destruction it did over two decades ago.

Natural disasters, like volcano eruptions, are unavoidable. However, there are measures that can be taken to avoid preventable catastrophes, like fires.

National Fire Prevention week was Oct. 3-9 and the theme for this year was “Test your smoke alarms.”

“The main purpose of this Week was to make everyone aware of fire safety,” said Jerry P. Sack, fire chief, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. “This was our 15 minutes of fame where we can inform people of further ways to prevent a fire.”

According to the United States Fire Administration Act of 2003, a fire department responds to a fire every 18 seconds, and each year, fires cause roughly 3,700 deaths and \$11 billion in economic damages.

However, there are many ways to prevent a fire, and if more fire prevention measures are taken each year, statistics can change.

“Everything starts with the basics,” explained Sack, an Austin, Minn., native. “Make sure you know where your exits are, practice drills in your home and have a plan.”

According to Tina Leary, assistant chief of fire prevention, MCAS Miramar, having an evacuation plan is the most important precaution someone can take to survive a fire.

“Whenever you go somewhere, you should look for different exits that you can take in the event of an emergency. For example, in the barracks, you could use the windows,” explained Leary, an Oceanside, Calif., native. “It is important to know your surroundings.”

It is also important to ensure that one’s residence is kept safe. Candles should be used with extreme caution. Clothing should not be left on top of a lamp. (Electric cooking appliances should be unplugged when not in use. The overloading of electrical outlets should also be avoided by unplugging all items after using them. Smoking should be avoided inside as well.

In addition, other fire starters, like matches and lighters, should be kept away from children.

“The majority of children injured and killed in fires are 3 years old,” said Leary. “Most children that I have asked know where their parents hide their matches and lighters.”

To inform children and prevent child-related accidents, the Fire Department visited the Child Development and Youth Centers here.

“The firefighters taught them how to stop, drop and roll, how to test a door for fire on the other side and how to crawl low during a fire,” said Sack.

According to Sack, the Fire Department has also been conducting prescribed, controlled burns to clear some of the brush on East Miramar that could fuel future fires.

“History repeats itself,” said Sack. “We do not want another San Diego fire to occur like last year.”

To avoid a fire on Miramar, the Fire Department has also been ensuring buildings have a 30-foot clearance of all brush surrounding them.

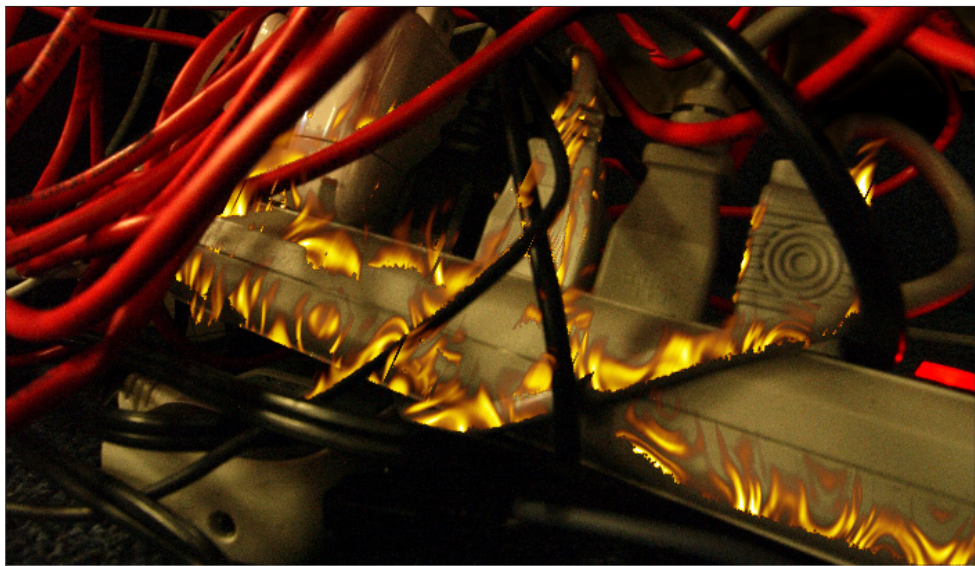
To end fire prevention week, the Fire Department hosted an event Oct. 9 for all per-

sonnel on base. The event featured the Burn Institute and U.S. Forest Service.

The Fire Department was not the only one taking the time to help prevent future fires. Units like Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, have taken the initiative to have a fire marshal check their squadron’s barracks during fire prevention week for anything that could cause a fire. The fire marshal also checked for broken smoke alarms, which could help save the Marines in the event of an emergency.

“More than 50 percent of homes do not have batteries in their smoke alarm. A lot of people use the batteries for other items and forget to replace the ones in their smoke alarm. It is important to check fire alarms

See **FIRE**, page 10



Overloading electrical outlets with various plugs may cause a fire. This can be avoided by unplugging all items after using them. *Photo illustration by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones*



# Air Show Parking

Today through Sunday, MCAS Miramar will be sponsoring the Miramar Air Show. This event will require adherence to a special parking and traffic circulation plan.

All available parking spaces in and around the flight line will be used for event parking.

Your assistance and patience is greatly appreciated. Listed below are some parking tips.

- Marines/civilian employees needing flightline access for air show business:

\* Section will request a mobility pass, through Michael Thomas of Marine Corps Community Services 577-7962, to allow personal and government access to the flight line.

\* Individual swipe cards will work at the turnstiles for access to work areas.

- For Marines/civilian employees who have to stand duty:

\* Section will request a pass, through Provost Marshal's Office operations officer, commercial 577-1283.

\* Name, duty assignment and vehicle information should have been submitted no later than Oct 12.

- For Marines/civilian

employees attending the show:

\* Enter the base and park in general parking. Reserved unit parking will be used as event parking Friday through Sunday.

\* Buses will be running from each parking area to flight line access points.

- For base housing residents:

\* We encourage you to leave your vehicles at home and walk or take the free bus to the show.

\* Quickest access in and out of station is through the North Gate.

- For VIPs/General Officers/SES/handicapped persons:

\* Commanding general-invited guests will be provided parking passes and driving instructions to parking areas.

\* All others will be directed to pre-designated parking areas.

Please refer questions about parking and station access to PMO operations at 577-4073/1283.

Security is everyone's responsibility! If you see something suspicious, please report it to the nearest military policeman or contact the PMO desk sergeant at 577-4068.





# 2004 Air Show schedule

## Morning

*\*Radio-controlled aircraft demonstration (pre-show)*

*\*John Helton, “America’s Smallest Aircraft Carrier”*

*\*Lima Lima Sky Painting (Friday only)*

*\*Patriot’s Team (IL-39s)*

*\*Bret Willat, “Sailplane Magic”*

*\*Sean deRosier “SkyRocker” One Design*

*\*Shockley’s “Shockwave” Jet Truck*

*\*Dave Buchanan’s Special Effects Hang Glider*

*\*Eric Beard’s “Russian Thunder” Yak-54*

*\*Marine Air Ground Task Force departure*

## Afternoon

*\*Invocation, National Anthem, flag drop*

*\*Commanding general’s remarks*

*\*U.S. Navy Leap Frogs*

*\*MAGTF assault demo*

*\*John Collver, AT-6 Texan*

*\*F-16 Fighting Falcon*

*\*F-16 Fighting Falcon, P-51 Mustang flight*

*\*Russian MiG-17F*

*\*F-117 Nighthawk Stealth*

*\*Sean D. Tucker*

*\*B-2 Stealth Bomber fly-by (Saturday only)*

*\*AV-8B Harrier demo*

*\*Blue Angels Navy Jet Team with “Fat Albert”*

## Twilight

*\*AV-8B Harrier demo*

*\*John Collver, AT-6 Texan*

*\*U.S. Navy Leap Frogs*

*\*”Fat Albert” jet assisted takeoff, C-130 demo*

*\*John Helton, “America’s Smallest Aircraft Carrier”*

*\*Steve Stavrakakis, Romanian IAR-823*

*\*Sailplane Magic*

*\*“Russian Thunder” Yak-54*

*\*Dave Buchanan’s Special Effects Glider*

*\*Bill Reesman, Russian MiG-17F “MiG Meteor”*

*\*Robosaurus*

*\*Fireworks display*

*\*Great Wall of Fire*





# Reserve ‘Avengers’ drive into Iraqi action

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — Even with all the capabilities and technology the military possesses, combat during hours of darkness in a war zone can still be extremely difficult.

Even when the mission is a routine patrol, it is imperative that Marines are able to see what is in front of them at night.

That is why reservists here from 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, currently serving in Security Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, use the Avenger anti-aircraft weapons system and its night vision technologies to assist the troops at night.

Armed with a Forward-Looking Infrared camera, the Avenger is capable of seeing much further through dark conditions than night vision goggles.

Currently augmenting the Quick Reaction Force, 4th LAAD Bn., the Avenger platoon goes out on evening patrols to provide nightly reconnaissance support.

“We can see extremely far and clear with the FLIR,” said Marietta, Ga., native Cpl. James E. Godfrey, LAAD gunner, Avenger Platoon. “In a way, we’re the eyes for the Marines around us.”

A full-time student at Georgia Southern University, this reservist is pursuing a degree in communications and broadcasting, and has been working with the Avengers for

four years.

“With (the FLIR) technology,” added the 22-year-old, “we can take out the enemy before we’re even within range of their weapons.”

Although the Avenger provides the QRF with a tactical advantage, it was not originally intended for troops on the ground.

“The Avenger is capable of holding eight Stinger missiles when fully loaded and was primarily tasked with defending ground troops from low-altitude aerial attacks,” said Johnsboro, Ga., native Staff Sgt. Lavictor B. Freeman, platoon sergeant, Avenger Platoon.

“With no air threat from the enemy out here, we really don’t have a need to use the (Stinger missiles),” added the reservist who worked security in Atlanta night clubs, as well as owned and operated a car stereo shop, before being activated.

Missiles aren’t the only type of firepower the Avenger is packing. It also comes equipped with an M-3P .50 caliber machine gun that brings a powerful punch to the battlefield.

“The M-3P fires faster than the traditional M-2, and is hooked up to a computer that automatically adjusts for wind and elevation,” said Godfrey. “Every shot hits its target.”

Uniquely designed for a Humvee, the gunner’s seat for an Avenger is mounted on the back of the vehicle inside of a turret capable of rotating 360 degrees.



**Staff Sgt. James M. Fender, (left), and Cpl. Daniel L. Paulete, gunners from Avenger Platoon, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, currently serving in Security Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, prepare for a test fire on a range at Al Asad, Iraq, Sept 27. The Avenger Platoon is responsible for providing support for security aboard the air base located in the western Iraqi desert. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**

“The turret rotates pretty fast so that we can quickly lock on to (enemy targets),” said San Jose, Calif., native Staff Sgt. James M. Fender, Avenger systems maintainer, Avenger Platoon. “It’s designed to hit moving targets, so the computer stays locked on the target even while the turret is moving.”

The Avenger’s turret is also designed to provide protection from the harsh desert heat, as well as the danger of enemy fire.

“There’s actually an air conditioning unit built in to keep the gunner cool,” said the 28-year-old. “We also have a remote control unit (that allows the Avenger crewmen to operate the turret from a safe distance) so that we won’t be killed if the (vehicle) gets fired on.”

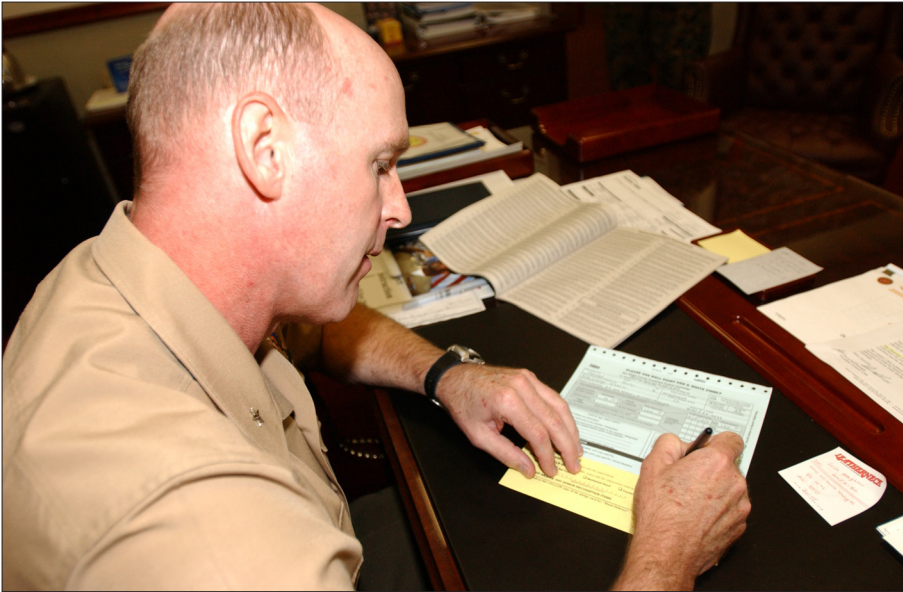
Working for Pacific Architectural System Corp. in San Dimas, Calif., as a field service technician, Fender’s job as a reservist corresponds to his job in the military.

“(As a reservist) I work with a lot of electronics and mechanics,” said Fender, “and that’s the same stuff I do on the Avenger.”

According to Freeman, the Avenger is a deadly foe to meet on the battlefield and is a significant addition to the base’s security.



**During a daily maintenance check, Cpl. James E. Godfrey, gunner, Avenger Platoon, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, currently serving in Security Battalion, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, climbs into the turret of an Avenger Humvee Sept. 27, in Al Asad, Iraq. The Avenger Platoon provides support for base security aboard the installation located in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri**



## A general donation

Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen, commander, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, and commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, signs his donation form for the 2005 Combined Federal Campaign. Miramar is currently campaigning for the CFC, which presents an opportunity for servicemembers to donate to a wide variety of charities and non-profit organizations. Photo by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira



# Miramar takes first step towards breast cancer awareness

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Servicemembers wearing pink ribbons, beads and signs joined the community for a walk supporting the fight against breast cancer, Oct. 6, in support of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Many people participating in the walk knew someone with breast cancer. Sequora M. Hernandez, military spouse, wore a pink sign reading “Laurie Betting, number one mom.”

“My mother passed away from breast cancer a month ago today (Oct. 6). It hit home close to my heart,” she said. “Hopefully (this walk) will make other people open up about it.”

Lance Cpl. Chris N. Williamson, Breast Cancer Awareness Walk participant, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, says breast cancer, like many cancers, affects mission accomplishment when it hits a family member.

“It’s kind of hard to do your job if you have the loss of someone on your mind. Family is what keeps us together,” said the Sacramento, Calif., native. “The family is always behind the scenes cheering you on. It’s important to have someone to fight for.”

Juanita A. Pratt, military spouse, walked for her sister, a breast cancer survivor, and two friends who were recently taken by the disease. “Raising awareness will educate the community about the importance of performing self-exams and getting mammograms. In the military it is free. There is no excuse to prevent you from getting one,” she said.

Although Pratt has lost loved ones, her perspective on the disease is positive.

My sister’s been cancer free for six years. The battle (against breast cancer) can be won. By coming out here, we are taking the strides towards winning that battle,” she

said.

Susan E. Rist, family nurse practitioner, Branch Medical Clinic, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, is a recent breast cancer survivor. “I was a very, very lucky person. I went for a breast reduction and the plastic surgeon found it. My mammogram four weeks before was negative,” she said.

“Mammograms are not perfect but they can really increase survival rate,” said the Providence, R.I., native.

In addition to mammograms (for women over 40) and yearly check ups, women of all ages should also perform monthly self-exams. Using all these measures can dramatically increase a person’s chance of survival.

Breast cancer affects men by hurting the family unit, but it can affect men more directly as well. “Male Marines can get breast cancer. It’s rare, but it does happen. All Marines can help prevent it by having a healthy lifestyle. Eating in moderation and having a balanced diet is key. Fast food is only going to increase your chance of getting cancer. Exercise is important too,” said Chief Petty Officer Bruce W. Adams, administrative officer, Branch Medical Clinic, MCAS Miramar.

Adams says a healthy lifestyle will not prevent cancer, and doing every check up and self-exam on time may not



**ABOVE:** Sequora M. Hernandez, military spouse, (right) and her friend April D. Hardegree participate in a breast cancer awareness walk Oct. 6. **BELOW:** After the breast cancer awareness walk Oct. 6, air station residents stop by information booths to learn more about the disease. *Photos by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira*



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TRAINING

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rine who participated not only passed, but also improved in every area the course covered, said Cpl. Jason M. Montoya, nuclear, biological and chemical specialist, MAG-16, and 20-year-old Aurora, Colo., native.

“It was motivating and it taught me a lot about the Marine Corps,” noted Montoya, who just graduated from the course as the class guide, or leader. “I enjoyed it.”

“The course will help us to become better people, which will help us become better Marines,” the MAG-16 Marine added. “It makes us more knowledgeable in everyday life and shows us different viewpoints on how to lead.”

Initially, the idea of holding a Corporal’s Course seemed a daunting task to the faculty advisors because they believed the air base and combat circumstances wouldn’t be conducive to the class, Gerbacia said. The advisors soon learned that it might be the ideal place for the course, he added.

“Just like Marines do, we overcame the environment,” Gerbacia said. “We actually got to do things we didn’t expect.”

As part of the course, the leaders were able to incorporate a fire and maneuver range into the training syllabus. Gerbacia noted that the range, “teaches the Marines how to communicate while firing, which is small unit leadership in its purest form.”

Small unit leadership isn’t the only thing gained from the ranges held at Al Asad, Rubio noted. Familiarity with how the Marines will fire in full battle gear is what prompted most of the battle-sight zero ranges MAG-16 has held.

“It’s important to get their true (weapons

sight settings) in the battle gear,” said Rubio. “In the ‘rear’ you don’t have all that gear on, but here in a combat situation, you need to have those rounds well-aimed and well-placed to be able to hit your target while having all you gear on. It can make the difference between life and death.”

Pfc. James A. Lowe, aviation operations specialist, MAG-16, and 21-year-old Louisville, Ky., native agreed that everyone in Iraq, especially those in military occupational specialties other than combat arms, should be afforded the opportunity to battle-sight zero their weapon.

“If you don’t have a proper sight setting on your rifle, how can you expect to hit anything?” Lowe asked in reference to Marines who think that finding a correct battle-sight zero is unnecessary. “We are all Marines and riflemen.

“It makes each person that much more prepared for anything,” he continued. “These little things not only make us better Marines, but also better qualified to survive out here (in Iraq).”

MAG-16 has also been holding courses in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program to prepare its Marines for this unwanted eventuality, Lowe said.

“We live in a pretty secure environment (at Al Asad, Iraq),” Lowe said. “MCMAP gets us out there and our hands dirty. If something bad were to happen, it just helps us maintain that warrior mentality, which you need in a combat zone.”

FIRE

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every six months,” explained Leary. “It is much better to be inconvenienced now, than to be dead later.” (According to the National Fire Prevention Association, the chances of surviving a home fire increase by 40 to 50 percent if the home is safeguarded by a smoke alarm.

“I think it’s good to check things like smoke alarms, because it can save your life later,” said Lance Cpl. Leodolfo Monarrez, field wireman, MWCS-38. “It is better to take the necessary safety precautions now, because you never know what can happen in the future.”

There will always be natural disasters like Mount St. Helens erupting. However, preventative measures can be taken to ensure a fire disaster does not happen to you.

AWARENESS

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catch all breast cancer, but it certainly improves your chances of survival. When breast cancer is detected in its earliest stages, the survival rate is nearly 97 percent, according to the Young Survival Coalition, a non-profit organization founded on the fight against breast cancer.

If a lump or abnormality is found during a self-exam, the examiner should contact a doctor without delay. Some breast lumps are benign, but all lumps should be checked out. Other symptoms of breast cancer include: swelling of part of the breast, irritation or dimpling

of the skin on the breast and spontaneous discharge from the nipple.

“Girls say to me, ‘I am young. Why do I need to do (breast exams)?’ They have to be educated. Then they can go back and nag their mothers and aunts,” said Rist.

Research shows that tumors in young women grow and spread more rapidly than tumors in older women. Women under 40 are also not routinely screened, leading to late diagnosis. Although the chance of getting breast cancer grows higher with age, the chance of dying from breast cancer is higher in younger women.

For more information on breast cancer contact your health care provider.



SecDef visits Al Asad

Clad in business suit and combat boots, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld (center) exits the flight line with the commanding generals within the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force shortly after landing during a visit to Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 10. Speaking to over 1,500 Marines, Sailors, soldiers, and airmen from I MEF, the secretary gave words of encouragement and motivation and reminded the troops of the great work they are doing in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Focusing on mission readiness, troop welfare, and the needs of the Corps, Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, commanding general, I MEF gave the Defense Secretary an intelligence brief concerning current operations throughout I MEF’s area of operation. During his first trip to Iraq since the Iraqi interim government was put into place, Rumsfeld traveled to Al Asad with Iraqi Defense Minister Hazim Shaalan al-Khuzaei. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*



Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to [www.mccsmiramar.com](http://www.mccsmiramar.com).

**Today:**  
Closed for the Air Show

**Saturday:**  
Closed for the Air Show

**Sunday:**  
Closed for the Air Show

**Wednesday:**  
6:30 p.m. Hero (PG-13)

**Thursday:**  
2 p.m. Cheaper by the Dozen (PG)  
6:30 p.m. Vanity Fair (PG-13)

Presentations and time subject to change.

Visit us online at  
[www.miramar.usmc.mil](http://www.miramar.usmc.mil)

FTAP 2005 survey

All FTAP 2005 Marines are required to complete an EAS online survey. The survey is at [lnweb.manpower.usmc.mil/ftas/survey](http://web.manpower.usmc.mil/ftas/survey). The survey is easy to use and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Once logged in, enter your RUC and the last four digits of your social security number. Upon completion, print and return to your career retention office.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

**Sunday:**  
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service  
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

**Wednesday:**  
7 p.m. Baptist service

**Monday-Friday:**  
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

**Jewish:**  
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD  
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

3rd MAW OIF book

Marine Corps Association bookstores are now carrying an exclusive new title detailing the exploits of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing during Operation Iraqi Freedom. “Third Marine Aircraft Wing: Operation Iraqi Freedom” follows the journey of 3rd MAW in support of I Marine Expeditionary Force and coalition forces in liberating Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein during OIF. The book is a testament to the Marines’ well-proven, colorful battle history. The cost of the book is \$34 for members and \$36 for non-members.

Marines can visit the MCA Bookstore located at Camp Pendleton’s Main Exchange, Building T1100 on Vandegrift Ave., or call 888-237-7683 to order a copy.

Super Bowl raffle

Until Dec. 5, any time you visit a Marine Corps Community Services club or restaurant, you will be eligible to enter a raffle for a chance to win a four day, three night all-expense paid trip for two to Jacksonville, Fla., to attend Super Bowl XXXIX. Entry forms can be picked up at the officer, staff noncommissioned officer, and enlisted clubs.

Air Show cart safety

Marines who are assigned to drive carts during the Miramar Air Show should know that safety is paramount. Unsafe drivers and speed violators will be reported to their units.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal’s Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
Green 1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374	Blue Mazda 626	CA/1STD385
Blue 1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135	Blue Ford Escort	CA/3EKK843
Red Honda Prelude	NONE	Red Honda DX	CA/2YBS381
Red Sea King Boat	NONE	Blue Ford Mustang	CA/2TAX992
White Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ639M	White Dodge Dart	CA/SUPX39
Black VW Jetta	NONE	Green Chevy Blazer	CA/TESCROW